

MINUTES- DRAFT/NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
December 10, 2019

Park & Rec. Members Present: Bonnie Bellows, Jay DeLaRosby, Brad Erickson, Bob Gausman, Dave Lynch, Mike Petrasek

Non-voting Members Present: Sharon Hatfield, Administrative Specialist, Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director, Wendy Berry, City Council

Presenter: Kevin Hendricks

1. ROLL CALL

2. ADOPT MINUTES

Chair Petrasek called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

The committee approved the minutes from the October 8, 2019 meeting.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Art Park Subcommittee Update

Kevin Hendricks updated the committee regarding the grant funding for the Art Park. Hendricks said that the goal of project was to create a community gathering place where “art can happen.” His group has narrowed down the project to mosaic column artwork created by artist Lori Green. The columns are usually 14 feet high. The column would be created over 3 community events. The first event would be the ideation event. Green would seek input on the “feel” of the column. The next event would be the painting event and the third event would be the tile event. The tile event would match up with the design. The events are set up so that everyone can participate, including people with disabilities.

Kendricks will submit a grant request to MRAC this Monday for \$10,000; one of the grant requirements is a matching grant of \$2,500. Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Schletty said that he just received a \$2,500 check from the South Robert Business Association. Kendricks’ grant request to Dakota County was rejected because the proposed park is not a Dakota County park. He may reapply next year if the requirements change. If he does not receive funding by February, he will start other fund raising events. Ideally, the installation of the pillar would be in September. It is dependent on Greene’s schedule.

Petrasek thanked Hendricks for the time and effort he has invested in the project. Member Erickson asked about lighting for the pillar and vandalism problems. Hendricks said that Greene has not had many problems with vandalism with her artwork. The City is insured for vandalism. Member Gausman said that the nearby fire hydrant should be repainted.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Master Plan Park Update- Oakdale and Southview

Schletty reviewed the features of Oakdale Park. The park is a mini, “pocket” park of about 1/3 acres. The area used to be an elementary school. The school closed and the area was dedicated as a green space. It is a small neighborhood park with a playground and a picnic shelter. The skating rink has been closed, (because of its proximity to Haskell Park’s rink.) Oakdale Park also has the infamous flag pole (no longer used) and

is lined with pine trees. Schletty said that the courts do need resurfacing; they are quite worn down. He does not think any other improvements are warranted.

Member Bellows asked about the barbecue pits and how often they are replaced. Schletty said they are not replaced unless the bottoms are rusted out. Bellows said the barbecue is in rough shape. Bellows asked about the color choice for the playground sets. She remembers that the committee chose natural colors for the Harmon Park. Schletty said that the color choice varies. Sometimes the colors are matched to the features already in the park. The playground equipment is picked first and then the color choice is made. Distributors tell staff what colors are popular. Different colors give children and parents the option of exciting choices.

Schletty talked about new landscaping for the park; he said the only landscaping needed would be new trees. A lot of the trees in the park are ash trees. There have not been many calls regarding the reinstalled basketball hoops. Bellows asked about how benches are distributed in the park. Schletty said that benches are placed near playgrounds. Picnic benches are usually built only in picnic shelters.

Schletty said that other additions to the park suggested by neighbors included a volley ball court and a gaga pit. Schletty advised the committee not to over program the park.

Schletty reviewed the features of Southview Park with the committee. Southview is a larger, neighborhood park of about 5 acres. It has a T Ball field, a tennis court and a skate rink. The police department uses the park for its Wednesday community events. warming house has been kept only for storage use. There is a small court for baske ball. The court has also been striped for pickleball. The park does have two entrances and two park identification signs. Maintenance staff built a rebound wall in the basketball court. There are a lot of cottonwoods and oak trees in the park. The staff got rid of the understory brush last year. It took care of the graffiti in the park.

Berry commented about the park. It is a nice park; she had an event with a bouncy house at the park. There is a lot of shade at the top of the hill and a ball field nearby can be used for kickball.

There are still people walking through the park even though it is very cold. Berry said it is important to have parks like Southview in very densely populated areas. Schletty added that the police department events and the Movies in Parks are attended by hundreds of people in Southview Park. Berry suggested having off-street parking for handicapped people. Schletty talked about reintroducing the park spotlight feature in the city newsletter. Bellows asked about a house that borders the park; Schletty said that the construction of the house has never been completed and the owners have never lived in it. The former police chief suggested that the City purchase the home but plans “didn’t go anywhere.”

The committee decided to delay the Master Plan discussion and visits to the parks until next spring when the weather cooperates.

b. Halloween Extravaganza

Schletty reported that the event went well even though it was very cold. It was attended by 300-400 people. The maze was very popular and Schletty thought he would “upscale” the maze next year. Petrasek said that he was not sure how to change the event; perhaps the event could start earlier in the evening next year.

5. **OTHER**

- a. **Park Usage Report** –Berry mentioned at the last committee meeting that a resident complained about the parks not being used. The resident has since apologized for his comment. Schletty presented reports from the City’s new Park software that records rental use of the all the field space and park shelter areas. The non-usage of the parks is a perception. The park’s shelters, trails and fields are being used frequently even during winter months.
- b. **Committee Reappointments**-Berry said that Members Petrasek, Erickson and DeLaRosby should submit applications to the City if they wish to remain on the committee.
- c. **MN Department of Natural Resources**- Schletty announced that the DNR has granted the City of West St. Paul a grant of \$25, 000 to plant trees. This grant will help replace trees removed because of Emerald Ash Borer infestation. Schletty said that the City now has too many maple trees (30 percent of the city tree inventory); he is working to diversify the tree population. Gausman mentioned that a disease resistant chestnut tree is being developed to resist blight.
- d.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The committee members adjourned at 6:41pm. The next Park and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield